

winter 2011 issue

Guide Dogs Victoria 

Guide Dog Tales



Running For Guide Dogs

Join us for Run Melbourne

PLUS A Significant Tribute • Top Dog Day • Our International Work

Run for Guide Dogs Victoria and support our adorable pups!

Are you looking for a great reason to get fit? Guide Dogs Victoria is now a charity option for Run Melbourne to be held on July 17. Presented by The Age, Run Melbourne gives its registrants the opportunity to pick their own cause to fundraise for.

Whether you are fundraising as an individual or your whole work place is involved, every cent you raise will contribute to the breeding and training of more Guide Dogs.

Use Run Melbourne as a fantastic team bonding experience or just a great reason to get fit. Choose from three distances; the 5km run/walk, the 10km run or if you're feeling really ambitious – the half marathon!

This year you can even get the whole family involved with a 3km kids run/walk on offer. Regardless of the distance, every step you take will be making a difference to Victorians who are blind or vision impaired.

For a step by step guide on how to register and choose Guide Dogs Victoria as your charity, visit www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au/runmelbourne

For more information on the free training sessions on offer from the team at Run Melbourne, visit www.runmelbourne.com.au ● ●

A Message from the President

We at Guide Dogs Victoria would like to wish you the very best for the new financial year and thank you for your support over 2010/11.

The success of Guide Dogs Victoria is very dependent on our donors and volunteers (including our puppy raisers). I would like to take this opportunity to thank this important group of the Guide Dog family for the significant contribution you make, and I look forward to your ongoing support.

Recently, Dr Graeme White announced his resignation as Chief Executive Officer of Guide Dogs Victoria. We have accepted his decision and appreciate the work he has done over a period of around 6 years, and wish him all the success in his new pathway.

The Board has commenced immediate action to fill this important vacancy. We have appointed Ken Swanson as our Acting Chief Executive Officer in the interim. Ken has extensive experience both in not-for-profit and in the private sectors.

Even though there will be a new chief executive officer, we remain committed to providing high quality guide dogs and client services. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our clients for your ongoing support.

The Guide Dogs Victoria's vision is to "provide high quality mobility training and support to every blind and vision impaired Victorian who needs assistance to achieve their maximum independence". It is important to recognise that we not only provide Guide Dog Mobility Services, but our services also include:

- Children's Mobility
- Acquired Brain Injury Mobility
- Orientation and Mobility
- Occupational Therapy
- Low Vision Advisory Services

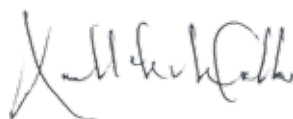
To provide our services, which are supplied at no cost to more than 1,500 Victorians every year, we are very dependent on our committed team of professional staff, and on the generous support of people like yourselves (through donations, puppy sponsorship, and purchase of our telemarketing products).

Overseeing the operations of Guide Dogs Victoria, and establishing and monitoring the implementation of our strategic direction, are a capable and committed Board made up of the following individuals, who assist me as President, and provide their services on a voluntary basis:

- John Rayner, Vice President
- Merv Tappenden, Treasurer
- Betty Amsden, OAM
- Iain Edwards
- Chris Nixon
- Gary Williams

Finally, on a sad note, for those people who may not be aware, one of our Vice Patrons Mrs Holly Rechter OAM passed away on 29 March 2011. Our thoughts are with Ken who should be proud of the significant contribution Holly made not only to Guide Dogs Victoria but the community generally.

Kind regards,



Russell A Walker
President
Guide Dogs Victoria





Ron Gains Confidence with Cane Training

Cane training is an important part of gaining confidence and independence for anyone who is blind or vision impaired. Guide Dogs Victoria has always encouraged its clients to maintain their cane skills in case they don't have access to a Guide Dog. One client, Ron Williams, discovered just how important keeping up with the cane was when his beloved Guide Dog, Dez passed away this year.

After Ron was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), he began training with a long cane which he used for 10 years. He decided to apply for a Guide Dog after his family encouraged him to do so and says it was a 'fantastic' decision.

Ron and Dez worked together for nine years, until late April this year when Dez passed away from spinal cancer. Whilst waiting to receive a new Guide Dog, Ron wanted to maintain the same level of freedom and independence he had with Dez, so he dusted off the long cane he had been so comfortable with all those years ago.

"I didn't think I'd need a cane if I had the dog. But when Dez passed away I had to go on the Guide Dog waiting list and go back to using a cane," he says.

Despite Ron being highly trained and experienced in using the cane, he says his self confidence had gone and the fear of going outside had settled in his mind. "I thought what was I going to do? How was I getting out of here? I had that fear of going out the front door. I don't know why. I just didn't have the confidence," he says.

To overcome those earlier fears and resume his highly independent life, Ron contacted Guide Dogs Victoria to brush up on his cane skills. Ron's Orientation and Mobility instructor helped him to re-learn some of the basics he'd forgotten from all those years ago.

With his updated skills, Ron can now find different ways home, predict and avoid obstacles, ensuring safe and independent travel. Ron says his recent re-training with the cane has helped boost his confidence and his Orientation and Mobility Instructor has been a huge support to help reinforce the skills needed in independent travel with the long cane. He understands now why it is so important to keep up regular cane practice, whether you have a Guide Dog or not.

"You should still have the cane up to date - remember the techniques, such as keeping the cane displayed in front of you," says Ron. ●●



Ron Williams using his long cane

Victoria's Biggest Dog Wash



We are pleased to announce that our very first Dog Wash was an enormous success! More than 240 dogs were primed and pampered at Flemington Racecourse, and we managed to raise over \$10,000 to help breed and train more Guide Dogs.

We also found Melbourne's cutest dog through our Cutest Canine Competition – a Toy Yorkshire Terrier named Oliver.

Congratulations also to Lorraine Robb, winner of our Guide Dogs Victoria Hamper!

The event was featured extensively in the media, including the 7PM Project, The Circle, and Channels 7 and 9 on the day. The Herald Sun, Leader, Fox FM, Triple M, Nova, SEN, MTR and ABC also covered the event.

We'd also like to extend a warm thank you to Jim's Dog Wash who provided their time, expertise and equipment on the day completely free of charge. We could not have achieved such an amazing result without their support.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make this event such a wonderful success. Let's hope we can make next year's Dog Wash even bigger and better! ●●

Top Dog Day

It's that time of year again! Top Dog Day!

Since 2007, Guide Dogs Victoria has been recognizing our 'top dogs' with a signature merchandising event.

Top Dog Day helps raise money for Guide Dogs Victoria as well as increasing our profile in the community through branded merchandise, including plush toys, badges, trolley coins and signature pens.

In its first year, Top Dog Day raised more than \$70,000 to help support blind and vision impaired Victorians through the breeding and training of more Guide Dogs.

There are many ways your business or office can support Top Dog Day:

- Order a box of Top Dog Day merchandise to sell around your office
- Turn your Friday night drinks or social club functions during July into a fundraiser
- Get permission for a casual dress day with a gold coin donation for the privilege
- Sell hot dogs during July for a gold coin donation
- Ask your company to match every dollar you raise

Visit www.topdogday.com.au for more information on how you can become involved in Top Dog Day. Or to fundraise for Top Dog Day, visit www.everydayhero.com.au/event/topdogday2011 ●●



Raising Darcy

Being a puppy raiser may seem like the best job in the world – and often it is – but it's also an equally challenging and important commitment. School teacher, Patrick Bennett, shares with us his puppy raising story.

A second time round puppy raiser, Patrick had no reservations in taking home another pup. In fact, on the same day that he returned his first puppy, Alana, Patrick picked up six-month old Darcy, his new puppy that would spend the next 14 months or so with him.

Darcy goes in to school with Patrick every day and has been warmly welcomed by the children. He says they absolutely adore him and love his affectionate nature. The class even have 'Darcy time', which dedicates a whole lesson to learning more about Guide Dogs Victoria, including not to distract a Guide Dog in harness. Patrick has even engaged other classes in the school enabling them to participate during Darcy time.

“Darcy’s a great dog. He’ll make a fantastic Guide Dog one day.”

Puppy raisers have a great responsibility in making sure their pup gets socialised and learns to be house trained and walk properly on a leash without being distracted. Alana performed well in her socialisation – she is currently in the second stage of her training to become a confident Guide Dog. And Darcy is progressing well, learning to ignore other doggy distractions and walking under Guide Dog protocol.

Patrick says he would definitely recommend puppy raising to those who have the time and capability.

“The biggest commitment is time and being responsible in following the rules. You have to realise they're going to grow up to be a working dog and possibly have a big impact on someone's life. The other good thing about being a puppy raiser is that I've met people and made some good friends through the program,” he says.

Naturally, the down side is saying goodbye. Patrick says, “It is hard because you get attached but you know from the beginning it's not your dog in the first place. You think 'I've got him for a short period of time, make the best of it and enjoy your time together'. You know you're doing a good service for a charity and unless I did this, I wouldn't have the opportunity to meet him in the first place”. ● ●



Diary Dates

Make sure you lock in these upcoming dates in your calendar!

Graduation Day **Sunday 6th November 2011**

Open Day **Sunday 26th February 2012**

Dog Wash **Sunday 15th April 2012**



Staff Profile - Puppy Raising Co-ordinator

Guide Dog Tales speaks to Naomi Wallace about her work as a puppy raising coordinator and what led her to choose a career at Guide Dogs Victoria.

Describe a typical day in the world of puppy raising?

My day starts with calls to puppy raisers and making visiting appointments to review the pups' progress. Then my day ranges anywhere from assisting in the vet clinic, to running a puppy class, attending information sessions and socialisation days, or supervising a PR event. Or I could be running group workshops on handling pups, making home visits, graduation walks with raisers and dogs who are ready to go to class, testing six week old pups to match new applicants, supporting Puppy Raising Advisors and much more!

What made you decide to work with puppies at Guide Dogs Victoria (apart from the obvious)?

I have always loved animals and meeting new people. What better way to bring these two things together than working with Guide Dog puppies and volunteer raisers? I started at Guide Dogs Victoria as a volunteer raiser myself, although working here was something I wanted to do since I was 17 years old. I considered vet science, however after work experience at a vet clinic I found losing sick animals was too difficult.

How long have you been in your current role?

The time flies when you're having fun! It's been almost seven years.

What is the best part of your job?

Variety. No one day is the same or even predictable. Bringing people and animals together, and having the ability to teach people how to care and nurture these wonderful creatures is great.

What is the worst/hardest?

Dealing with the disappointment that not all dogs make it through to be Guide Dogs. Even though raisers and advisors put in a lot of time and effort, it is not a job for every dog, although our aim is to support every raiser to try and achieve this.

What qualifications do you require to work in this area?

I achieved this position the old fashioned way and worked my way up from volunteer raiser, casual worker in the breeding centre, part time Advisor and now Coordinator. Strong people skills and an interest to continue improving and researching dog training methods goes a long way in aiming to be the best Puppy Raising Advisor or Coordinator I can be. A commitment to Guide Dogs Victoria and its staff and volunteers is important too. I also have a Diploma in Office Administration which helps support the management and clerical side of things.

What kind of person does it take to be in this job?

A Puppy Raising Coordinator will rely heavily on their people skills, communication, rapport building, problem solving and time management. It is of essence that Coordinators can support raisers and build their confidence and skills in dog handling whilst aiming to achieve benchmarks of success as each pup develops.



International Work

Guide Dogs Victoria is expanding its international horizons by entering into a partnership with the Guide Dogs Association of the Blind in Singapore, to provide client programs for their first two Guide Dog applicants. There is currently only one Guide Dog user in Singapore.

One of our highly experienced Guide Dog Mobility Instructors, Justin Marshall, travelled to Singapore this year to undertake assessment of the prospective clients.

Guide Dogs Victoria has a proud history of supporting International Guide Dog schools, providing expertise and support to improve the effectiveness of Guide Dog teams. The Guide Dogs Association of the Blind in Singapore approached Guide Dogs Victoria early this year to undertake their training due to our reputation for high quality and success.

This is a great opportunity for Guide Dogs Victoria to demonstrate the commitment the organisation has to vision impaired people across the globe.

Singapore presents its own challenges for Guide Dog users due to the busy city environment. Justin and the Guide Dog team need to ensure suitable dogs are matched with the clients. Singapore is certainly different to Australia's landscape - high rise apartments, no backyards and a heavy traffic flow. These variables will be taken into consideration to ensure the allocated Guide Dogs are both strong and willing enough to cope in such a challenging environment.

The other challenge will be overcoming cultural barriers as some communities consider dogs to be unclean.

Despite this, Justin remains positive. "It will be a successful program," he says. Good luck to Justin and the Guide Dog team in expanding Guide Dogs Victoria's horizons internationally! ●●

Bike Rider not deterred by Blindness

Pam Haigh was born with a rare genetic eye condition called Pattern Dystrophy that presents itself in midlife causing significant vision loss. She developed this in her 40s and went from perfect vision to legally blind within a short span of six months.

Despite this, she has not let her debilitating vision loss let her shy away from community and social events. Pam was the first blind person to participate in the four day Australian Bike Friday Club bike ride with her Guide Dog, Willoughby, to help raise money for Guide Dogs Victoria. The Club chose Guide Dogs Victoria as their charity of choice four years ago and have been supporting them ever since. There are now four Guide Dogs users participating each year in the ride.

An avid tandem bike rider, Pam also participates in the Lions Ride for Sight every year – fundraising for the Centre for Eye Research Australia. Her first riding experience was the Guide Dog Global Challenge, riding through Vietnam & Cambodia which helped raise over \$10,000 for Guide Dogs. She has even taken part in a 1,200 km ride from Berlin to Copenhagen with her first Guide Dog Earl.

"I would never have been bike riding if I hadn't lost my vision. Bike riding is just such a wonderful feeling for a blind person. Once you've lost your sight there's no speed in your life, you've always got to walk safely, walk slowly. But when I get on the back of the bike I'm free. I'm not hanging onto a dog and I can just let my mind wander," she says.

This year in March, the Australian Bike Friday Club raised over \$6,000 on behalf of Guide Dogs Victoria through donations and auctioned items which were donated by the Divas Group at Guide Dogs Victoria. A pair of hand knitted socks raised \$200, a scarf \$65,

and teddy bears \$35 which were all made by vision impaired women.

Based at Grafton, NSW, the 95 riders, including the three blind riders on tandem bikes, rode 80 to 100 km each day on different routes through the beautiful countryside of the area, finishing back at Grafton. Whilst the days were spent riding, in the afternoons they enjoyed BBQ gatherings, dinners and a Saturday night auction.

Pam admits that since her vision loss, she has felt more adventurous and active than ever before. Sky jumping, scuba diving with the sharks at the Melbourne aquarium and hot air ballooning have been just some of her quests.

Anyone aged from eight to 80 years old can participate in the Australian Bike Friday Club ride and help raise money for Guide Dogs Victoria. Luckily next year's event will be more accessible, being held at Rutherglen, Victoria. ●●



A Tribute to the Life of

Edith Holford Rechter

Known to family and friends as Holly, Edith Holford Rechter was a loving mother, wife and philanthropist. Her involvement in community work was extensive, but she will notably be remembered for her involvement in the establishment of the National Guide Dog Training Centre in Kew.

Holly and her husband Ken Rechter were jointly involved in the establishment of what is now Guide Dogs Victoria. Whilst Ken took the role of State and National Treasurer from 1962 to 1973, Holly joined the Furnishing Committee which raised funds to fit out the Training Centre. She also spent a number of years participating in a public speaking program to promote community awareness about the work of the new centre.

Holly dedicated fifty years of service as a member of the Toorak Ladies Auxiliary for Guide Dogs Victoria, and was its long serving President. In recognition of her services, she was appointed Vice Patron of Guide Dogs Victoria in 1998 and even had a Guide Dog puppy named in her honour. This was the ideal job for Holly as she loved meeting and talking to people, and had a genuine interest in others.

Taking on community work from quite an early age, Holly also took part in church events, was an inaugural member of the Young Wives group for 13 years, and a member of the Caulfield South Mother's Club and Parents Association for 18 years where she contributed to fundraising, school reading and religious education classes.

Due to her devotion to voluntary community services, she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for Community Service in 1983, in particular for her

service to the City of Caulfield, Caulfield Grammar School and the Guide Dog Association of Victoria.

Her family say they best remember her as a serious and private person, unmoved on many principles and standards, who considered others and treated them with great kindness. Courage and determination were the cornerstones throughout her lifetime.

Holly passed away peacefully on Tuesday 29th March 2011 surrounded by her husband, children and grandchildren at Cabrini Hospice. She has left a significant legacy to both her family and the community as someone who made a difference to the lives and welfare of others. ●●



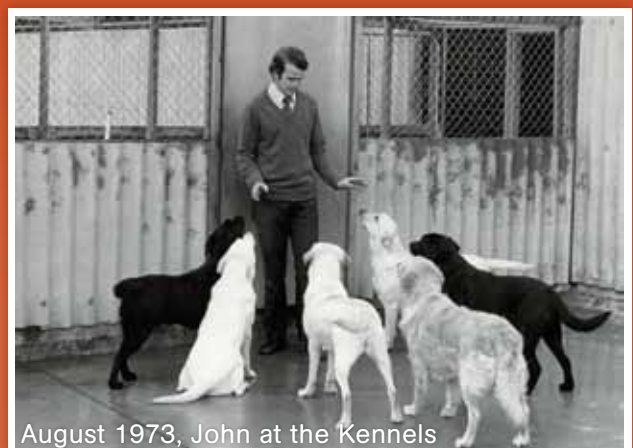
Edith with her husband, Ken Rechter

John Gosling reaches 40 year milestone

On February 4th 2011, John Gosling passed the 40 years service milestone with Guide Dogs Victoria. This incredible achievement reflects John's commitment to the vision impaired members of our community.

John has made an enormous contribution to Guide Dogs Victoria, from his early days as a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, to his leadership role as Guide Dog Services Manager, and more recently as International Services Manager.

While there have been many changes, one element that has remained strong is John's passion for our services and care for our clients. Please join us in congratulating John on this notable milestone. ●●



August 1973, John at the Kennels

Adventure, Decision Making and Exploring the Unknown

The first Children's Mobility Junior camp of 2011 was held on April 11 where thirteen Children's Mobility Service students participated in the 'Choose your own adventure' experience of a lifetime.

Setting out from Guide Dogs Victoria, the students worked together on a unique story adventure that was later painted onto trestle tables for other students to follow in the future.

The students then turned the campus into their very own campsite – equipped with tents, a small campfire and of course, loads of marshmallows!

Although the camp was full of fun and frivolity, it was also about instilling a sense of independence and team work in the students. They undertook activities such as finding their way to and from destinations including Eastland Shopping Centre.

One of the challenges the students faced was completing a ropes course in Belgrave that tested their problem solving skills and balance, as well as tackling

the Giant Swing. This was up to 18 metres in length and was a big challenge to those who attempted it.

Another challenge the students participated in was the 'Choose Your Own Adventure Public Transport Style'. In small groups – and accompanied by an instructor – the students chose where they wanted to travel from Fairfield train station. They had to plan their route, source information and use public transport to get there and back by 4pm. Students met this challenge head on, exploring the CBD, Docklands, Chadstone as well as taking a horse and carriage ride in the city. Big congratulations to all the students for achieving so much in such a short space of time.

Each student was awarded a certificate to demonstrate their participation and involvement in the camp. Students left feeling a great deal of satisfaction and thoroughly enjoyed the diversity of the program. One student, Micaela said, "This was the best camp I have been on because the adventure was different and I enjoyed being independent and helping other people out". ● ●





Valli

Twanny Farugia's Decision will make a Difference

Born with myopic eyesight, Twanny Farugia grew up with low vision. He was diagnosed with a detached retina in his right eye over 30 years ago, and now has approximately 1% vision in the bottom right quadrant of his left eye.

For some 20 years, Twanny used a mobility cane to get around until he was unfortunately hit by a car in 2009 while crossing a busy road. Having low vision, he didn't see the vehicle approaching and walked right in front of it. This incident and many other close encounters with cars, electricity poles, and other people prompted him to apply for a Guide Dog. In June 2010, he was matched with Valli, who gave him the extra support and independence he needed.

Having Valli has given him a great admiration for the work Guide Dog trainers and puppy raisers do. "I think the work the trainers do is just amazing. Not just because of what Valli learnt through her training, but also because she keeps learning. She is constantly picking up new things," Twanny says.

Twanny chose to leave a bequest to Guide Dogs Victoria and become a regular sponsor because he wanted to give something back. "I have been given so much with Valli and I feel fortunate that I am in a position where I can now help Guide Dogs Victoria," he says.

Gratitude was a key factor in Twanny's decision to leave a bequest to Guide Dogs Victoria. Thankful for all the things he had been given in his life, he decided it was time to give something back.

And he certainly has given back. Despite having multiple chronic health issues and vision impairment, Twanny spent 15 years working in his own private practice as a consultant in loss and grief to the Allied Health Industry and general public. Over the past 30 years he has been a volunteer at the Springvale Disability Action Group and Springvale Lions, as well as the Springvale Aid and Advice Bureau. Currently he

is the Treasurer for The White Cane Wanderers Group (a self-help vision impaired social group) and The Communities' Council on Ethnic Issues.

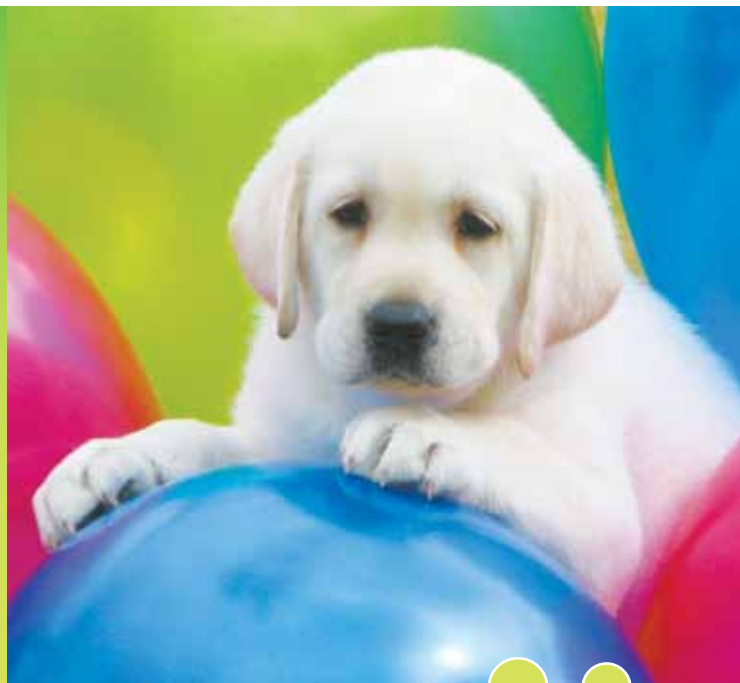
By leaving a gift or legacy to Guide Dogs Victoria in your Will, you can make a difference to the lives of many Victorians who are vision impaired. For more information, please contact our Bequest office on (03) 9854 4444 for a free information kit and personal Will profile. Your confidentiality will be respected. ●●



Twanny with Valli on Graduation Day

Our Wish List

At Guide Dogs Victoria we provide our clients with the best of care, but we often wish we had the funds to purchase the latest specialised equipment. If you are able to donate funds to cover the cost of any of the items on our current Wish List please call Danni George on **(03) 9854 4444**.



Acquired Brain Injury Mobility

Vision Assessment & Training Tool.....	\$1,000
10 x Miniguides to develop greater attention/ awareness (\$450 each).....	\$4,500
Spatial Assessment Kits.....	\$1,000

Arnold Cook House

60cm television for clients.....	\$2,500
6 x Manchester sets (\$100 each).....	\$600
New furniture for TV room.....	\$5,000
New crockery, glass ware, table cloths & placemats.....	\$1,300
New bench for the lounge room to house cafe bar.....	\$1,000
Repairs to leaking roof of the BBQ area.....	\$5,000
Paint for ACH.....	\$300

Children's Mobility Services

3 x Laptops for use while on CMS camps with adaptive technology software (\$2,000 each)....	\$6,000
Custom designed iPhone Application for vision impaired clients.....	\$10,000
Paper for our PIAF machine (used to make tactile maps, drawings etc).....	\$300
Translation of Marcus and Gabby books into other languages.....	\$2,000
Eschenbach electronic magnifier.....	\$500

Centre for Vision Independence

10 x Photo books to illustrate CVI equipment and services for clients and referring professionals (\$1,000 each).....	\$10,000
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Guide Dog Services

Guide Dog Services Manual to improve training documentation (includes laptop & scanner).....	\$3,500
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12 x New runners for Guide Dog Instructors (\$125 each).....	\$1,500
Equipment and obstacles (including Flexi Leads) used for training Guide Dogs.....	\$2,000
30 x Harnesses and Handles for new Guide Dog teams (\$200 each).....	\$6,000

Kennels

Equipment including new dog beds and toys..	\$5,000
3 x Portable communication systems for staff working in kennels / breeding centre (\$1,500 each).....	\$4,500
10 x Winter jackets (\$300 each).....	\$3,000

Marketing

PA System for donor and supporter functions..	\$2,000
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Orientation & Mobility

Personal GPS units to teach clients distances and direction for route planning.....	\$1,300
Miniguides (free to clients) used to develop greater attention / awareness.....	\$450

Occupational Therapy

10 x Nordic walking poles (\$195 each).....	\$1,950
32cm LCD monitor to be used for low vision magnification.....	\$1,000

Puppy Raising

Laptop computer to allow development and integration of reports into our database remotely.....	\$3,000
5 x Runners for Puppy Raising staff (\$125 each)....	\$625

Coles Puppy Sponsorship

This time last year, long-time Collection Dog supporters Coles, sponsored two Guide Dog puppies, Jason and Janita from the generous donations people give every day to the Collection Dogs program. Both pups have been progressing well in their training and are well on their way towards becoming confident Guide Dogs.

In another exciting development, Coles have taken Guide Dogs virtual by launching a donation option through their online shopping portal, www.colesonline.com.au. We'd like to thank Coles for their continuing support and especially to those who give so generously to the Collection Dog program, both in store and online. We couldn't do it without your support!

coles



Acknowledgements



Abeles Pty Ltd

Aero Manufacturing
Australia Pty Ltd

A.I.S Insurance Brokers/
Guardian

ANZ Value Resolution

Campbell's Soups
Australia

Causeway Hotel

ExxonMobil & Transfield
Worley Services

Fox FM

Freehills

Hyder Consulting

Insignia Management

Jani King

Jim's Dog Wash

Lateral Building Design &
Harding-Smith Family

Mildura Weekly

Panda Security

Paragon Financial Group

Pets Paradise

RACV Community
Partnerships

Ritchies Supermarkets

St Albans Textiles

UME Australia Pty Ltd

Wilbow Group Pty Ltd

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